

Evaluation Methods: Class participation, oral and/or written exams.

**I.**

# **CULTURE AND IDENTITY**

# Chapter 1: Culture

"Preservation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures."

-*Cesar Chavez*

Hispanic civil rights and labor leader

## Objectives

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- Define culture
- Compare and contrast different meanings of culture
- Explore cultural differences
- Identify culture shocks
- Discuss culture in American society
- Examine the influence of sub-cultures

## What is Culture?

Culture is a complex term due to the fact that it does not present a fixed meaning. People's perception of culture varies from place to place—that is called the world view which is a product of culture. Culture is the way of life of a group of people. It forms a person's life through influences that are available to everybody through the circle of humanity that is surrounding the individual at the center. Traditions, values, and criteria within the realm of family, friends, and other elements of influence shape one's culture.

Briefly, anthropologists define culture in a way that explains learned behavior. E. B. Taylor, the first professional anthropologist, defines culture as a variety of human experience: "Culture...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, arts, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Scupin, 2003)." In other words, as Laroche (2003, p. 68) puts it, "culture includes an implicit list of standard operating procedures." Those who have talked about culture interpret it as a realm that is comprised of traditional ideas, related values, and demonstrated behaviors. William Sonnenschein (1997) asserts that culture is learned, shared, and transmitted from one generation to the next and that it organizes life and helps interpret existence.

Furthermore, culture is a set of custom rules a group of people have learned to respond to life's events, such as deaths, births or weddings.

Culture is comprised of those characteristics of human life that are different from place to place. The most apparent of all these characteristics are language, traditions, food, clothes, arts, dance, music, and sports. Other characteristics of culture are invisible such as concept of time, religion, political ideology, friendship, beauty, sin, and education to name a few.

\* Shepard (1996) asserts that if you understand culture you have the opportunity to elevate your awareness of your own culture as well as the culture of other people.

\* Lindsey and Beach (2002, p. 59), offer a useful definition of culture: "Human behavior is immensely varied, and the variations are fundamentally determined by culture. Culture is a human society's total way of life; it is learned and shared and includes the society's values, customs, material objects, and symbols." Accordingly, every person's culture includes his or her social heritage that tells them which behaviors are appropriate and which are not.

Those norms and styles of life that we learn as we grow are indicative of our learned characteristics of customary life. Our parents, as immediate teachers and role models, have a great deal of impact on our personalities and the culture we build along the line of growth. They are similar to masons or bricklayers of a structure who put their hearts and minds into the work or the duty they are committed to accomplish. If the structure is laid with flaws, chances are that the shape would be slanted as it is erected. Some grandparents contribute to the upbringing of their grandchildren, yet it varies from culture to culture. The words of wisdom they enunciate provide a valuable groundwork for our future endeavors. In fact, our close association with our family circles, and our locality teach us many historical facts about our past generations. "All known prehistoric and historic societies are thought to have common features, called **cultural universals**, that aided in their survival" (Lindsey & Beach, 2002, p. 72). Accordingly, more than 50 years ago, George Murdoch, an anthropologist, who is known for his list of more than seventy cultural universals, introduced features such as family patterns, food taboos, religious rituals, ethics, folklore, and decorative arts, to name a few. An example of a cultural universal is *the taboo of incest*—referring to restrictions of sexual relations and marriage between blood-related

individuals (Murdoch, 1945). As most anthropologists and sociologists have observed, culture is always changing.

Due to human nature and life fluctuations, every culture is, at a snail's pace, on the move. Some examples of cultural change are: creativity and innovation within a cultural group, alteration, modification, and transformation in the physical environment, revolutionizing the fabric of society, and last but not least, interaction with other cultures. In some religious societies (Christian, Islamic, etc.), culture is saturated in the realm of religion. In most Islamic countries, religion plays an important role in shaping the society. In some, for example The Islamic Republic of Iran, where religion is fundamental to society, resistance is prevalent and nationalists who respect their culture, traditions, and heritage have a mental struggle to dichotomize the religion and culture and persist to draw a line between the two.

The character of a culture is defined by **values** that help us know what to do, but not necessarily how to do it. **Norms**, on the other hand, are rules of conduct that guide our behavior in specific situations. **Etiquette** is defined as the practices and forms prescribed by social convention or by authority (American Heritage, 1996). Within every system of culture, social manners are taught by elders as children grow up. Some parents, inadvertently, do not teach these manners to their youngsters. Teachers may fill the gaps as children receive compulsory education. Otherwise, the lack of etiquette and civility may cause some embarrassment and discomfort in later years.

#### *More Definitions of Culture:*

- The totality of socially transmitted behavior patterns, arts, beliefs, institutions, and all other products of human work and thought (American Heritage College Dictionary, 1993).
- Culture or ethnic groups represent associate belief and behavior systems that are passed down from one generation to the next through learning (Hogan-Garcia, 2003).
- The characteristic customs, social patterns, beliefs, and values of people in a particular country or region, or in a particular racial or religious group (Cascio, 2003).
- A system of values, beliefs, notions about acceptable and unacceptable behavior, and other socially



constructed ideas characteristic of a society or subgroup within a society (Garcia, 2002).

- Culture is learned behavior, constrained by inherited capacities that give general directions for specific and flexible behavior. Culture refers to values, ideas, expectations, things we make, clothing we wear, behavior we express. Culture shapes how we see things, what we make of what we see, and how we feel about it. We adapt to different environments and situations through culture. We survive with culture, perish without it (Middleton, 2003).
- Culture consists of material objects as well as the patterns for thinking, feeling, and behaving that are passed from generation to generation among members of a society (Shepard, 2003).
- Culture is often viewed as the behaviors, beliefs, values and attitudes of various groups. Broadly defined, culture can be defined as the way things are done within any group (Heuberger, 2001).
- Culture derives from the Latin root *colare*, and is associated with activities of preservation, of tending to and caring for (Benhabib, 2002).

## Cultural Differences

Cultural differences have always been critical and controversial. The main reason for this argument lies within the lack of knowledge and understanding of cultures and the misconception of race and ethnicity. Those who seek cultural diversity education should be able to distinguish the distinction between race and ethnicity as they explore cultural differences.

People are confused when it comes to race and ethnicity. Most sociologists make a clear distinction between race and ethnicity. Appropriately, race is a matter of social construct, and not an established biological concept (Heuberger, 2001). In other words, race is a social construct that unnaturally divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, and socioeconomic needs (Adams, et al., 1997). Some examples of race according to the U.S. Census classification of race includes, but not limited to, "White [Caucasian],

Black, Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, Asian or Pacific Islander, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Asian Indian, Samoan, Guamanian, other." **Ethnicity** is truly a matter of culture. It is related to many aspects of culture such as language, behavioral patterns, religion, traditions, heritage, and geographic origins. Sometimes, ethnicity and religion are mixed and make an exception such as in the case of Judaism—Jewish is a faith and an ethnicity. Social scientists have clearly distinguished human groups based on culture rather than race. "For example, when they refer to tribal groupings within the border racial category of Native Americans as separate ethnic groups, they are emphasizing cultural differences in defining group identity as opposed to biological or physical ones" (Diller, 1999, p. 49). A good example is Native American tribes which provided different rules and teachings for up-bringing their offspring.

It is best for all of us not to confuse ourselves with the term race and focus on cultural differences that are the focal point of diversity.

Middleton (2003) explains that "There's a great tendency to see groups of people in terms of their differences from us. They look different, act different, speak a different language. When they say and do things that we do not like, we attribute it to who they are—to the idea that they are different in an essential way." (p. 64)

Variation in the ways of life, ideology, traditions, clothing, arts, music, concept of time, and many other factors provide a basis for differences among cultures. Because of these differences, and the ethnocentric assumption that others see the world in the same way as we do, people are confronted with cross-cultural misunderstanding. Cultures put forth such a powerful influence that many people demonstrate **ethnocentrism**, the tendency or belief in the superiority of one's own ethnic group. In other words, ethnocentrism is judging other groups by the values of one's own group. In chapter three, we shall read more on ethnocentrism.

— Cultural differences can be found in differing living conditions, relationships, emotions, working styles, teaching, raising children, and ruling a society, to name a few. There are many cultural differences. Simply, some ways of life or habits that are practiced in eastern cultures may seem bizarre in western cultures, and vice-versa.

{For instance, shows of emotion are not welcomed in many cultures. Conversely, in the American culture, it is not only considered





reconciled, relationships will be disputed and conflicts are inevitable. Extreme cultural difference may lead to "culture wars." Amitai Etzioni in his remarkable work *the New Golden Rule* (Etzioni, 1996) asserts: "Culture wars lead to divisiveness, a lack of resolution on overdue issues ("gridlock"), intergroup hatred, and tribalism." (p. 101)

Along differences, there are commonalities among cultures in the world too. For instance, in the Islamic world, religion is a factor of commonality. The Arab world represents a variety of cultures, yet two obvious similarities are language and religion. They speak Arabic, and practice Islam. It should be mentioned that in the Islamic religion, followers of Shia and Suni represent two different paths in Islam. It is also important to say that religion in the Islamic world plays an important role in decision making and setting standards. Some Islamic governments take advantage of their people by influencing the power of religion in devising laws and regulations.

In summary, it is important to mention about cultural differences when we talk about diversity. Cultural differences appear in social interactions, working together, or sharing a common cause. Workplaces in the United States have become increasingly multicultural in recent years. Tension and misunderstanding arise in workplaces where people from different backgrounds and national origins have to spend time together for many hours under one roof. Today's workforces in North America consist of a variety of minorities from many parts of the world, mostly Hispanics, Asians, Europeans, Eastern Europeans, people from the Far East, and people from the Middle East, not to mention Native Americans, and African Americans. These culturally different workers represent diverse attitudes and various socio-economic standards which from time to time may lead to problems among workers and employers. It has become a common phrase these days to be "culturally competent."

## Culture Shock

Culture shock happens when we observe actions or behaviors that are totally different from our own. Ostensibly, any different norm, event, or style of life that is foreign to an individual would be a shock when another culture is encountered.



about air, water, food, means of transportation, bathrooms, odor, and the list can go on forever. Americans are so careful of their health, so as not to get sick when visiting another part of the world which does not have immediate medical care as in America (Middleton, 2003).

## Sub-Culture

In most sociology texts we find some information about "sub-cultures." Cultural diversity owes much to the assumption that sub-cultures provide a substantial ground to the discussion of diversity in any given society. Particularly in the United States, sub-cultures are prominent and more accessible for research and special studies. A **sub-culture** is a group of people within a culture who practices a unique way of life, based on historical facts or generated through ideologies. In other words, sub-cultures are characteristically based on race, ethnicity, age, gender, profession, ideology, or religion.

Academic institutions in the United States attract many immigrant students and staff from all over the world. In fact they are one of the largest employers of diverse ethnicities (Laroache, 2003). "American college campuses represent an amazing degree of sub-cultural diversity. Colleges are struggling with the issue of celebrating diversity but also valuing unity among their students, whether they are American students or international students" (Lindsey & Beach, 2002).

Native Americans, the Amish, religious groups, distinctive groups such as gays and lesbians, or disabled populations are considered sub-cultures. People with exotic customs, magical beliefs and practices are also among the sub-cultural diverse population.

Culture is the broad set of experiences, kinship structure, and so forth which is a cohesive factor for peoples of a tribe, nation, or a region. Culture is the way of life—the standard operating procedures which form our daily lives. We grow with culture and may change it as we adapt to a new environment for survival, freedom, and perhaps prosperity. Due to significant cultural differences, we encounter unusual habits and practices that are foreign or strange to us. The observation of these unusual behaviors is known as "culture shock," especially when we visit a foreign country with a different life style. America is a unique collection of cultures, yet it presents its own cultural values that all sub-cultures respect and acquire for their working lives. Within the broader culture in America lie many sub-cultures whose race, ethnicity, gender, beliefs, ideas, and occupation indicate the quality of being different and a sense of integrity that is the product of our democracy.

## Test Your Knowledge

*Part One: Fill in the blanks:*

1. Many aspects of diversity create cultural differences. Name four of them.

a.....b.....c.....  
d.....

2. Give four examples of different aspects of culture that we are programmed by.

a.....b.....c.....  
d.....

3. What do we first notice when we first meet someone?

a.....b.....c.....  
d.....

*Part Two: Select the best choice*

Instructions: Place the number next to each statement that is agreeable with your understanding and beliefs.

1. extremely agree    2. somewhat agree    3. somewhat disagree    4. disagree    5. not sure

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Civility and ethics are linked to cultural norms.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ In order to understand cultural differences we need to interact with people from different backgrounds.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ The analogy of parents and masons or brick-layers represents the importance of upbringing of children.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Culture is learned and unlearned.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ Culture does not necessarily make a person successful or unsuccessful.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ People should be respected for who they are not what culture they represent.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Traditions, values, and criteria within the realm of family, friends, and other elements of influence shape one's own culture.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ No culture is better than the other culture.

9. \_\_\_\_\_ Culture wars create divisiveness, chaos, and anarchy.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ The Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems to be more of a culture war than a shooting war..

*Part Three: Discussion Questions*

1. To learn about your race and ethnicity, what criteria would be instrumental to educate yourself?
2. What factors would you choose to compare and contrast your cultural differences with another person from a different background?
3. How would you prepare yourself if you find out that there will be soon a new neighbor from another country moving into your community?
4. What culture shock have you experienced in your life so far, either by visiting another country or encountering others at your work or school?
5. What is your perception about culture wars? Do you think conflicts are caused by cultural differences or they are the products of political justifications?



# WHAT IS CULTURE?

Here are some definitions:

- Culture refers to the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.
- Culture is the systems of knowledge shared by a relatively large group of people.
- Culture is communication, communication is culture.
- Culture in its broadest sense is cultivated behavior; that is the totality of a person's learned, accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behavior through social learning.
- A culture is a way of life of a group of people--the behaviors, beliefs, values, and symbols that they accept, generally without thinking about them, and that are passed along by communication and imitation from one generation to the next.
- Culture is symbolic communication. Some of its symbols include a group's skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions.
- Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, on the other hand, as conditioning influences upon further action.
- Culture is the sum of total of the learned behavior of a group of people that are generally considered to be the tradition of that people and are transmitted from generation to generation.
- Culture is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.

## THEORY OF CULTURAL DETERMINISM

- The position that the ideas, meanings, beliefs and values people learn as members of society determines human nature. People are what they learn. Optimistic version of cultural determinism places no limits on the abilities of human beings to do or to be whatever they want. Some anthropologists suggest that there is no universal "right way" of being human. "Right way" is almost always "our way"; that "our way" in one society almost never corresponds to "our way" in any other society. Proper attitude of an informed human being could only be that of tolerance.
- The optimistic version of this theory postulates that human nature being infinitely malleable, human being can choose the ways of life they prefer.
- The pessimistic version maintains that people are what they are conditioned to be; this is something over which they have no control. Human beings are passive

creatures and do whatever their culture tells them to do. This explanation leads to behaviorism that locates the causes of human behavior in a realm that is totally beyond human control.

## CULTURAL RELATIVISM

- Different cultural groups think, feel, and act differently. There are no scientific standards for considering one group as intrinsically superior or inferior to another. Studying differences in culture among groups and societies presupposes a position of cultural relativism. It does not imply normalcy for oneself, nor for one's society. It, however, calls for judgment when dealing with groups or societies different from one's own. Information about the nature of cultural differences between societies, their roots, and their consequences should precede judgment and action. Negotiation is more likely to succeed when the parties concerned understand the reasons for the differences in viewpoints.

## CULTURAL ETHNOCENTRISM

- Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own culture is superior to that of other cultures. It is a form of reductionism that reduces the "other way" of life to a distorted version of one's own. This is particularly important in case of global dealings when a company or an individual is imbued with the idea that methods, materials, or ideas that worked in the home country will also work abroad. Environmental differences are, therefore, ignored.

## MANIFESTATIONS OF CULTURE

Cultural differences manifest themselves in different ways and differing levels of depth. Symbols represent the most superficial and value the deepest manifestations of culture, with heroes and rituals in between.

- Symbols are words, gestures, pictures, or objects that carry a particular meaning which is only recognized by those who share a particular culture. New symbols easily develop, old ones disappear. Symbols from one particular group are regularly copied by others. This is why symbols represent the outermost layer of a culture.
- Heroes are persons, past or present, real or fictitious, who possess characteristics that are highly prized in a culture. They also serve as models for behavior.
- Rituals are collective activities, sometimes superfluous in reaching desired objectives, but are considered as socially essential. They are therefore carried out most of the times for their own sake (ways of greetings, paying respect to others, religious and social ceremonies, etc.).
- The core of a culture is formed by values. They are broad tendencies for preferences of certain state of affairs to others (good-evil, right-wrong, natural-unnatural). Many values remain unconscious to those who hold them. Therefore

they often cannot be discussed, nor can they be directly observed by others. Values can only be inferred from the way people act under different circumstances.

- Symbols, heroes, and rituals are the tangible or visual aspects of the practices of a culture. The true cultural meaning of the practices is intangible; this is revealed only when the practices are interpreted by the insiders.

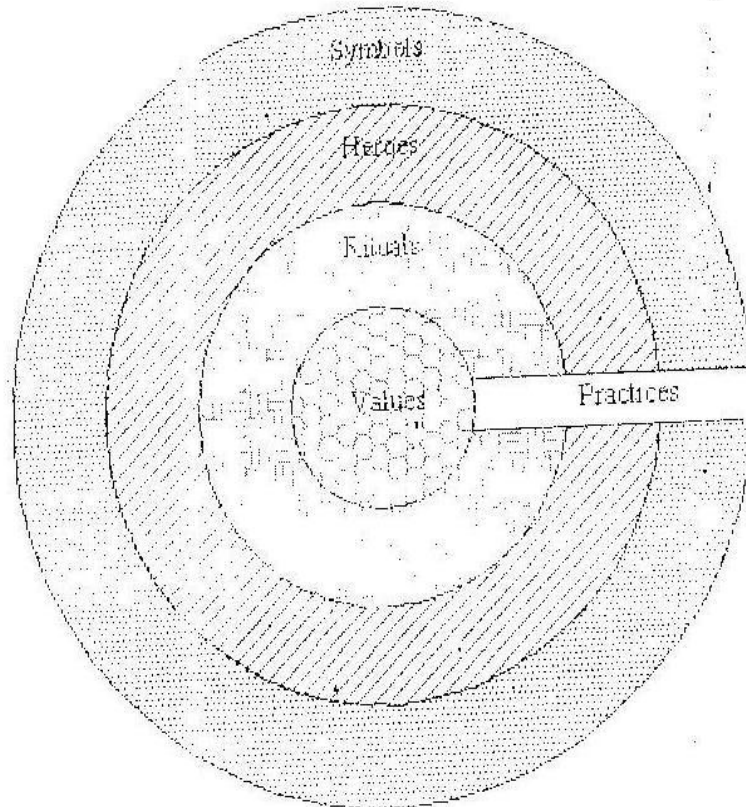


Figure 1. Manifestation of Culture at Different Levels of Depth

## LAYERS OF CULTURE

People even within the same culture carry several layers of mental programming within themselves. Different layers of culture exist at the following levels:

- The national level: Associated with the nation as a whole.
- The regional level: Associated with ethnic, linguistic, or religious differences that exist within a nation.
- The gender level: Associated with gender differences (female vs. male)
- The generation level: Associated with the differences between grandparents and parents, parents and children.
- The social class level: Associated with educational opportunities and differences in occupation.
- The corporate level: Associated with the particular culture of an organization. Applicable to those who are employed.

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## MEASURING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

A variable can be operationalized either by single- or composite-measure techniques. A single-measure technique means the use of one indicator to measure the domain of a concept; the composite-measure technique means the use of several indicators to construct an index for the concept after the domain of the concept has been empirically sampled. Hofstede (1997) has devised a composite-measure technique to measure cultural differences among different societies:

- Power distance index: The index measures the degree of inequality that exists in a society.
- Uncertainty avoidance index: The index measures the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertain or ambiguous situations.
- Individualism index: The index measures the extent to which a society is individualistic. Individualism refers to a loosely knit social framework in a society in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. The other end of the spectrum would be collectivism that occurs when there is a tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups; they expect their in-groups (relatives, clans, organizations) to look after them in exchange for absolute loyalty.
- Masculinity index (Achievement vs. Relationship): The index measures the extent to which the dominant values are assertiveness, money and things (achievement), not caring for others or for quality of life. The other end of the spectrum would be femininity (relationship).

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## Supplementary Reading:

Read "Chapter 2: KEY ISSUES IN THE STUDY OF CULTURE AND IDENTITY"

Book: CULTURE AND IDENTITY by Warren Kidd



## **II.**

# **CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

## WHAT IS CULTURAL DIVERSITY?

Possible answers:

\*Diversity is defined as the condition of being different. In other words, it means dissimilarity and variance between things. The differences could be in size, weight, age, texture, and so on.

\*Diversity is a range of differences that include gender, race, ethnicity and age. It also includes differences that are not visible like education, professional background, and functional area of expertise, and religion. The way countries view diversity depends on the cultural values of the people, the range of diversity in the population and attitudes towards these differences. (Source(s): International ORganizational behaviour: text, cases and exercises. By Anne Marie Francesco and Barry Allen GOLD.)

\*(From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia) *Cultural diversity* is the variety of human societies or cultures in a specific region, or in the world as a whole. (The term is also sometimes used to refer to multiculturalism within an organization.) ...

As well as the more obvious cultural differences that exist between people, such as language, dress and traditions, there are also significant variations in the way societies organize themselves, in their shared conception of morality, and in the ways they interact with their environment.

By analogy with biodiversity, which is thought to be essential to the long-term survival of life on earth, it can be argued that cultural diversity may be vital for the long-term survival of humanity; and that the conservation of indigenous cultures may be as important to humankind as the conservation of species and ecosystems is to life in general. The General Conference of UNESCO took this position in 2001, asserting in Article 1 of the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity that "...cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature"

\**Cultural diversity*: Multiplicity of sub-cultures and different value systems in a plural or multicultural society. (<http://www.businessdictionary.com>)

\**Cultural diversity*: A variety or multiformity in race, ethnicity, language, tradition, culture, morality and religion existing within a community, organization, or population.

\**Cultural diversity* is a term used to mean that a group or area contains people from many different cultures and backgrounds. These areas are considered diverse because everyone is unique and different.

\**Cultural diversity* is having people of different races, cultures, religions, nationalities, ethnic groups and backgrounds making up a community.

\**Why is Cultural Diversity Important?* It is important because a country, workplaces and schools include persons of various ethnic groups and interests. We can learn from one another, but first we must have a level of understanding about one another in order to work together effectively.

## Cultural Diversity

(By: Mich  lle LeBaron June 2003)

Montaigne said, "The most universal quality is diversity." [1] Given that diversity abounds, the project of understanding each other is both daunting and important. It is a journey never finished, because the process and the endpoints change constantly. The journey is bound up with communication and conflict, since misunderstandings and miscommunication can cause and escalate conflict. Effective communication is often the key to making progress in a conflict.

Progress through conflict is possible, and the route is twofold. First, self-knowledge and self-awareness are needed. Without these, our seemingly normal approaches to meaning-making and communication will never be clear enough that we can see them for what they are: a set of lenses that shape what we see, hear, say, understand, and interpret. Second, cultural fluency is needed, meaning familiarity with culture and the ability to act on that familiarity. [2] Cultural fluency means understanding what culture is, how it works, and the ways culture and communication are intertwined with conflicts.

This may sound simple enough, but it actually requires significant, continuous effort. As Edward T. Hall writes in the introduction to his book, *The Dance of Life*, [3] for us to understand each other may mean, "reorganizing [our] thinking...and few people are willing to risk such a radical move." Communication theorists, anthropologists, and others have given us tools to develop awareness of our own lenses, and to facilitate the reorganization of thinking necessary to truly understand others whose starting points may differ from our own. (...)

[1] Montaigne, 1580. Quoted in Tracy Novinger. *Intercultural Communication*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001)

[2] This is closely related to the concept of framing.

[3] Edward T. Hall, *The Dance of Life. The Other Dimension of Time* (New York: Doubleday, 1983), 7.

# Chapter 2: Diversity

"The more we let each voice sing out with its own true tone, the richer will be the diversity of the chant in unison."

-*Angelus Silesius* (1624-1677)  
A Polish-German Poet and Priest

"Diversity: the art of thinking independently together."

-*Malcolm Forbes* (1919-1990),  
A famous American publisher

## Objectives

- Define the meaning of diversity
- Identify different types of diversity
- Explore important concepts of diversity
- Discuss the key elements in diversity
- Distinguish the importance of diversity education
- Explore the role of media in diversity

## What is Diversity?

In chapter one, we defined culture, explored a variety of definitions of culture, and learned how to define it in our own words. In this chapter, we learn about diversity, different types of diversity, and explore the realm of diversity in general that has been the main topic of discussion in recent years. **Diversity** is defined as the quality of being different. This word is derived from "diverse" meaning differing from one another, or simply composed of distinct elements or qualities. Now, we are dealing with the concept that is the focal point of this book: What is this *diversity* that many people are talking about these days? What and why should we know about diversity? These questions can be answered in many ways. The simplest and foremost answer is to learn how to live and work together without creating any conflict. Many problems are generated from a



September 11, 2001, the loss of more than 3000 lives in the attack on the World Trade Center Twin Towers, the Pentagon, and the plane crash in Pennsylvania, the general public realized that a lack of knowledge about other cultures and ethnicities can become very detrimental to the fabric of our society. The media imposed a great deal of attention on terrorism, the Middle East, and the lives and works of Muslims in the United States, yet we found that we need more academic experts on global studies, especially the Middle East. Furthermore, if Americans, including government authorities, knew more about other cultures and relaxed their individualistic mindset, they could have been prepared and mobilized for the early prevention of such tragedies. It is a prevailing indication that the American public needs more global education and understanding of cultures.

The recent tragedies, conflicts, and engagements of the U.S. troops in Afghanistan and Iraq prompted authorities, educators, and human rights activists to focus more on cultural diversity around the country. Schools, colleges, and universities started teaching courses on diversity, and more workplaces began seminars and mandatory training sessions for their employees.

Diversity is an inevitable phenomenon in North America. The United States of America has been dealing with diversity since the pioneer era. The history of our modern time is the best evidence of diversity that every American should know about. More than 200 years of history reveal how much work has been done to make it possible for people of all backgrounds to live and work together. Needless to say that challenges still exist in all states and in every level of human life.

According to Luhabe (2001), "Diversity is a new culture of human behavior that honors people where they are, with what they know, how they acquired this knowledge, and how they apply it. This could be different for each person." (p. 75) The fact is that diversity is here with us and shall remain for ever. We need to learn how to acknowledge our similarities and at the same time embrace our differences.

Below, Thomas and Aldelfer (1988) express their thoughts about cultural diversity:

Any observer of contemporary life in organizations must conclude that cultural diversity is an unavoidable part of it. Even communities and societies once thought to be synonymous with homogeneity, such as the Rocky Mountain regions of the western United States, Japan, and Scandinavia, are finding that technology and economic progress necessitate the opening of their physical and psychological boundaries to those who are culturally and ethnically different.

### **Different Types of Diversity**

There are many kinds of diversity to be identified around the globe. In the western world, especially in North America, we encounter many more types of diversity compared to other parts of the world.

We are all different, in one way or the other. Understandably, diversity includes many different attributes including culture, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, age, ability, language, weight, style, idea, income, orientation, geographic location and many more aspects which make people unique.

When the topic of diversity is the theme of discussion many unfamiliar words or concepts may be used. Words and phrases such as inclusion, equity, equal opportunity employer (EOE), affirmative action, harassment, civil rights, women in the workplace, glass ceiling, gays and lesbians, "don't ask, don't tell," minorities, religious practices, anti-defamation, pluralism, harmony, tolerance, and unity, to name a few, are all related to diversity (Arrien, 2001), yet each has its own unique definition and should not be replaced for diversity. Each of these terms will be discussed in later chapters.

In a society as blended as the United States, where a variety of people live in 50 states united as one nation, believing in democracy and justice, diversity demonstrates a spectra of numerous levels of income, living conditions, quality of education, different legislations, different geographic locations, and social norms. Since the 1980s, more than ever, the subject of diversity has been gaining momentum in our society due to the fact that major organizations are realizing that in

order to be successful in sales and services we need to educate everybody about diversity in the workplace. In today's workplace one needs to associate with people from many different cultures. Individuals with different religious backgrounds, social styles, and different communication patterns can be found everywhere in our society. The first and foremost thing to do is to accept diversity and seek the ways that make us more comfortable with one another. The main types of diversity which identify people and their associations are explained below:

### *Race*

The race issue in the United States history begins with European pioneers, particularly the English who confiscated the land from the native people. The indigenous people referred to the European intruder as "White Man" as opposed to Native Americans who had darker skins. Later, in early 1600, Africans were brought to this country by Europeans against their will. Subsequently, color of skin was the main indicator of people who also represented different geographic regions of the world. Generally, **race** signifies certain, common and distinguishing physical characteristics comprising a comprehensive class which appears to be derived from a distinct historic source (NOW, 2004).

The topic of race has become a well-known subject all over the United States. Dialogues on race have gained momentum in many areas, including civic and academic. Police brutality is repeatedly questioned about whether or not it relates to racism. Many police chiefs around the country have opened dialogues with their communities to exonerate themselves from the accusation of racism. Needless to say, the Rodney King tragedy of 1991 in Los Angeles, California, brought racism to the forefront again in America.

### *Ethnicity*



differences, anthropologists use the term *ethnic group* and *ethnicity*." (p. 56). One good example of an ethnic group are the Amish people in the United States who have maintained their way of life for centuries to date regardless of high tech modernization not far away from their ambient. It is proper to say that ethnicity is the collective differences we learned from our ancestors via cultural heritage.

## Sex

Sex is a biological characteristic and not a social construction. Issues about sex (including sexism and chauvinism) are a worldwide concern which varies from place to place. As a part of diversity challenges, sexism is troublesome in many work places. Women and minorities have been discriminated in their workplaces for promotions and salary raises. The term **glass ceiling** refers to a discrimination that is imposed upon women and minorities. Simply, these individuals are deprived of their rights of getting promoted to a higher level and the subsequent salary designated for a particular position. Women, despite enormous gain in recent years, still account for only 10% of senior management in *Fortune* 500 companies. (Meyerson & Fletcher, 2001).

## Gender

In recent years the word *gender* has become well established in its use to refer to sex-based categories, as in *the politics of gender*. Many anthropologists have supported this usage. They prefer to use sex for reference to biological categories, and gender while referring to social or cultural categories. The National Organization for Women defines gender in the following manner: *Gender* was not chosen because gender connotes a socially imposed sex-role. One cannot discuss "gender" issues without reference to stereotypes according to biological sex identification (NOW, 2004). The significant point in cultural diversity about gender is the status of males and females in social and political settings. Some female individuals may be deprived and discriminated against due to the fact that traditionally some positions are held by males. Even a male homosexual can be denied a job due to his gender status. In ancient times females have held high social and political positions. Artemis, a female naval commander in chief for the Persian Empire fleet is an example of high office that was not held by a male. This fact has also been proven by anthropologist



Lewis Mergan about what was practiced at some time in the past and reversed through time. Another term that is controversial in our society and should be learned in cultural diversity is Sexual Orientation. Coming out of the closet has been, in some cases, very difficult for some individuals, primarily because of the trepidation and anxiety of not being accepted within family, relatives, and their circle of friends. Sexual orientation has been the subject of discussion for quite sometime in American workplaces, especially the military. In the 1990s, President Clinton supported the policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" to alleviate the hardship existing in the military and other workplaces regarding sexual orientation. Sexual orientation specifically includes lesbian and gay, bisexual and heterosexual people (NOW, 2004).

### *Geographic Diversity*

The world is full of diversity. When you leave your homeland to visit another country you notice the differences quite easily such as landscapes, landmarks, monuments, building structures, locations, and neighborhoods, to name a few. The climate has a great impact on the way people live, think, and behave. This phenomenon has, sometimes, created perceptions mixed with stereotypes. For many years Europeans referred to people from the Middle East as those who ride camels. Similarly, the term "Third World" coined by Europeans referred to those countries with no industrialization. Today, this term is not used very much and has been replaced by "Developing Countries."

In the United States, geographic diversity often refers to a generalization based on class, status, race, ethnicity, or other differences that exist among people. Particularly, the strong ties between status and neighborhood make geographic diversity known to people who identify places using stereotypes. Examples are those big states and regions in the country with large populations and diverse ethnic backgrounds. Regions and states which are subject to national stereotypes are the South, West, Midwest, New England, Florida, Texas, New York, and California (Heuberger, 2001).

## Diversity Education

People often feel nervous, tense, or uncomfortable when they hear something is going on about diversity in their workplaces. In the past two decades diversity education has become a grave concern of the leadership teams of major organizations including but not limited to educational institutions. These feelings and tensions are generated from a lack of education about diversity in our society. The key principals that are emphasized by many experts in the field are **awareness** and **understanding**. These two primary requirements in any multicultural setting provide individuals with the necessary vision to look at the world with acceptance and respect.

Awareness is a sense of gathering information about someone or something. To begin with one needs to have a good self-awareness. Self-awareness is an effective tool in diversity education, and should be experienced along with understanding other peoples' ideas, beliefs, traditions, and sensitivities. Understanding differences is a challenge for most people who have never been around people different from themselves. For example, a former student of mine from a rural area of Wisconsin, who had never seen anybody different from his own ethnicity found it quite challenging when life brought him to a major metropolitan area for higher education where he interacted with many diverse people. Understanding diversity is not an easy task. Wise families can help prepare children prior to facing a bigger world.

### *Cultural Diversity Education Should Begin at Home*

John Locke, an English philosopher, in his work, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690), expressed his view that humans everywhere are born as "empty cabinets" and that by filling the cabinets with different experiences, they change who they are (Middleton, 2003). Starting with this analogy of John Locke, I would like to express that parents and the environment of each child play important roles in shaping personalities and minds. In other words, the family institution is a remarkable entity that one should graduate from with flying colors. What we are teaching our children today is the basis for what will make things better for them tomorrow.

Imagine how a gardener lovingly tends his garden on a daily basis. Imagine how a loving parent is so excited to raise a child—both

take a lot of love, patience and care. Everything can have an impact on a child or a seedling, good or bad. Some people swear by talking to their plants they grow big and healthy. However, there are parents who do not realize what they are doing to their children by talking negatively about others. Unfortunately, they do not teach their children how to accept other human beings who are different from them. Instead, they teach them their biases, prejudices, and ethnocentric beliefs that they have believed their whole lives. The fact of the matter is that people of this nature embed a seedling of hatred in their children's heart and feed them as they grow.

Obviously, a young man or a young woman who were raised by parents with ill thoughts about human diversity will find it hard to associate with people from different backgrounds and ethnicities. Just recently, a student of mine expressed that "It is hard not to be a racist." He explained that he always hears his father talking negatively about other people from different backgrounds, enforcing his biases when they have family gatherings, and he encourages that every American should carry a gun to protect themselves from the immigrants who have invaded our country. The same student at the end of the class told me that he would not be a racist, and that this class had changed his life.

We hear many prejudicial stories similar to the one mentioned above everyday from different students. Part of the problem is that complacency and the sense of individualism in our society contribute to our ignorance of other cultures, other ethnicities, or indigenous people.

The "oneness" of mankind, and the jubilation of human dignity guides us to light, to shine, and direct others to the source of light.

Home is the best place to start educating our children about human diversity. With positive attitudes and open-mindedness children can learn basic knowledge about the sea of human variations. Parents should start thinking about educating their children about the similarities and differences amongst cultures.



## Test Your Knowledge

*Part One: Select the best choice.*

Instructions: Place the number next to each statement that is agreeable with your understanding, beliefs, or action.

1. almost always    2. frequently    3. occasionally  
4. hardly ever    5. almost never

1. \_\_\_\_\_ When a newcomer comes to my community I try to get acquainted and interact with him/her.
2. \_\_\_\_\_ At my workplace, I am curious to find out if there are any co-workers from different backgrounds. This will help me to know them and make an impression that they are welcomed.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ My parents taught me that no matter if people have different skin-colors, or speak different languages, they should be respected for who they are.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Although I grew up in an area where I saw no other person different from me, I respected people who came from different backgrounds.
5. \_\_\_\_\_ I think it's a good idea to host an exchange student once in a while.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ When television shows a report from a different country I try to watch it.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ Jose Gonzales is my neighbor; should he need any help I would try to do my best to help him.
8. \_\_\_\_\_ There are some foreign guys at my school. I have no problem talking to them.
9. \_\_\_\_\_ It is appropriate to get acquainted with a person's background and tradition before jumping to a conclusion.
10. \_\_\_\_\_ Interactions with people from different religious backgrounds does not bother me.

*Part Two: Discussion Questions*

1. What does diversity mean to you and your family?
2. Have you ever encountered a situation where diversity was a critical issue?
3. When you realized that diversity is a part of your life, what sense contributed to this understanding and why?



4. As you were growing up, how much instruction did you receive about our diverse world?
5. What kind of media have been informative to your awareness on diversity and why?
6. How do you value diversity?
7. How did you socialize with an opposite gender in your childhood?
8. What was your reaction when you first saw a person with a different skin tone?

## Beyond Cultural Identity: Reflections on Multiculturalism

By Peter Adler

Multiculturalism is an attractive and persuasive notion. It suggests a human being whose identifications and loyalties transcend the boundaries of nationalism and whose commitments are pinned to a larger vision of the global community. To be a citizen of the world, an international person, has long been an ideal toward which many strive. Unfortunately, history is also rich with examples of totalitarian societies and individuals who took it upon themselves to shape everyone else to the mould of their planetary vision. Repulsive as it was, Hitler had a vision of a world society.

Less common are examples of men and women who have striven to sustain a self-process that is inclusively international in attitude and behaviour. For good reason, Nation, culture, and society exert tremendous influence on us, structuring our responses to experience. Human beings cannot be culturally influence. No one is culture free. Yet, such that we may now be on the threshold of a socially and psychologically a product of the twentieth century.

We are reminded daily of home sits a television set to team, are losing. A Canadian and paintings imported from Hong Kong pay unheard of students in England and French batik. A team of Malaysian, their Western counterparts: planet the streams of the world human interaction. Though superficial and only a manifestation of the shrinking of the globe, each such vignette is a symbol of the mingling and melding of human cultures. Communication and cultural exchange are the preeminent conditions of the twentieth century.

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merge together to form new currents of communication. Though superficial and only a manifestation of the shrinking of the globe, each such vignette is a symbol of the mingling and melding of human cultures. Communication and cultural exchange are the preeminent conditions of the twentieth century.

For the first time in the history of the world, a patchwork of technology and organization has made possible simultaneous interpersonal and intercultural communication. Innovations and refinements of innovations, including modems, electronic mail, facsimile machines, digital recording, cable television, satellite dishes, and desktop publishing have brought people everywhere into potential contact. Barely a city or village exists that is more than a day or two from anyplace else: almost no town or community is without a television. Bus lines, railroads, highways, and airports have created linkages within and between local, regional, national, and international levels of human organization. The impact is enormous. Human connections through communication have made possible the interchange of goods, products, and services as well as the more significant exchange of thoughts and ideas. Accompanying the growth of human communication has been the erosion of barriers that have, throughout history,

geographically, linguistically, and culturally separated people. As Harold Lasswell (1972) once suggested, "The technological revolution as it affects mass media has reached a limit that is subject only to innovations that would substantially modify our basic perspectives of one another and of man's place in the cosmos." It is possible that the emergence of the multicultural person is just such an innovation.

## A NEW KIND OF PERSON

A new type of person whose orientation and view of the world profoundly transcends his or her indigenous culture is developing from the complex of social, political, economic, and educational interactions of our time. The various conceptions of an "international," "transcultural," "multicultural," or "intercultural" individual have each been used with varying degrees of explanatory or descriptive utility. Essentially, they all attempt to define someone whose horizons extend significantly beyond his or her own culture. An "internationalist," for example, has been defined as a person who trusts other nations, is willing to cooperate with other countries, perceives international agencies as potential deterrents to war, and who considers international tensions reducible by mediation (Lutzker 1960). Others have studied the international orientation of groups by measuring their attitudes towards international issues, i.e., the role of the U.N., economic versus military aid, international alliances, etc. (Campbell, Gurin and Miller 1954). And at least several attempts have been made to measure the world-mindedness of individuals by exploring the degree to which persons have a broad international frame of reference rather than specific knowledge or interest in some narrower aspect of global affairs (Sampson and Smith 1957, Garrison 1961, Paul 1966).

Whatever the terminology, the definitions and metaphors allude to a person whose essential identity is inclusive of different life patterns and who has psychologically and socially come to grips with a multiplicity of realities. We can call this new type of person multicultural because he or she embodies a core process of self-verification that is grounded in both the universality of the human condition and the diversity of cultural forms. We are speaking, then, of a social-psychological style of self-process that differs from others. The multicultural person is intellectually and emotionally committed to the basic unity of all human beings while at the same time recognizing, legitimizing, accepting, and appreciating the differences that exist between people of different cultures. This new kind of person cannot be defined by the languages he or she speaks, the number of countries he or she has visited, nor by the number of personal international contacts that have been made. Nor is he or she defined by profession, place of residence, or cognitive sophistication. Instead, the multicultural person is recognized by a configuration of outlooks and world-view, by how the universe as a dynamically moving process is incorporated, by the way the interconnectedness of life is reflected in thought and action, and by the way this woman or man remains open to the imminence of experience.

The multicultural person is, at once, both old and new. On the one hand, this involves being the timeless "universal" person described again and again by philosophers through the ages. He or she approaches, at least in the attributions we make, the classical ideal of a person whose lifestyle is one of knowledge and wisdom, integrity and direction, principle and fulfillment, balance and proportion. "To be a universal man," wrote John Walsh (1973) using "man" in the traditional sense of including men and women, "means not how much a man knows but what intellectual depth and breadth he

has and how he relates it to other central and universally important problems." What is universal about the multicultural person is an abiding commitment to the essential similarities between people everywhere, while paradoxically maintaining an equally strong commitment to differences. The universal person, suggests Walsh, "does not at all eliminate culture differences." Rather, he or she "seeks to preserve whatever is most valid, significant, and valuable in each culture as a way of enriching and helping to form the whole." In his embodiment of the universal and the particular, the multicultural person is a descendant of the great philosophers of both the East and the West.

On the other hand, what is new about this type of person, and unique to our time, is a fundamental change in the structure and process of identity. The identity of the "multicultural," far from being frozen in a social character, is more fluid and mobile, more susceptible to change, more open to variation. It is an identity based not on a "belongingness" which implies either owning or being owned by culture, but on a style of self-consciousness that is capable of negotiating ever new formations of reality. In this sense the multicultural person is a radical departure from the kinds of identities found in both traditional and mass societies. He or she is neither totally a part of nor totally apart from his or her culture; instead, he or she lives on the boundary. To live on the edge of one's thinking, one's culture, or one's ego, suggested Paul Tillich (1966), is to live with tension and movement. "It is in truth not standing still, but rather a crossing and return, a repetition of return and crossing, back-and-forth--the aim of which is to create a third area beyond the bounded territories, an area where one can stand for a time without being enclosed in something tightly bounded." Multiculturalism, then is an outgrowth of the complexities of the twentieth century. As unique as this kind of person may be, the style of identity that is embodied arises from the myriad of forms that are present in this day and age. An understanding of this new kind of person must be predicated on a clear understanding of cultural identity.



**IV.**

**YOUTH CULTURE &  
SUBCULTURE**

## Youth subculture:

A youth subculture is a youth-based subculture with distinct styles, behaviors, and interests. Youth subcultures offer participants an identity outside of that ascribed by social institutions such as family, work, home and school. Youth subcultures that show a systematic hostility to the dominant culture are sometimes described as countercultures.

Youth subcultures are often distinguished by elements such as fashion, beliefs, slang, dialects or behaviours. Vehicles — such as cars, motorcycles, ~~scooters~~ or ~~skateboards~~ — have played central roles in certain youth subcultures. In the United Kingdom in the 1960s, mods were associated with scooters while rockers were associated with motorcycles. Specific music genres are associated with many youth subcultures, such as punks, ravers, metalheads and goths. The study of subcultures often consists of the study of the symbolism attached to clothing, music, other visible affections by members of the subculture, and also the ways in which these same symbols are interpreted by members of the dominant culture.

Socioeconomic class, gender, intelligence, conformity and ethnicity can be important in relation to youth subcultures. Youth subcultures can be defined as meaning systems, modes of expression or lifestyles developed by groups in subordinate structural positions in response to dominant systems — and which reflect their attempt to solve structural contradictions rising from the wider societal context.<sup>[1]</sup>

The term *scene* can refer to an exclusive subculture or faction. Scenes are distinguished from the broad culture through either fashion; identification with specific (sometimes obscure or experimental) musical genres or political perspectives; and a strong in-group or tribal mentality.<sup>[2]</sup> The term can be used to describe geographic subsets of a subculture, such as the Detroit drum and bass scene or the London goth scene. (From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia)

# Global Youth Culture

By Richard Kahn and Douglas Kellner

"Global youth culture" is the transdisciplinary category by which theorists and policy analysts attempt to understand the emergence of the complex forms of hybrid culture and identity that increasingly occur amongst youth throughout the world due to the proliferation of media like film, television, popular music, the Internet and other information and communication technologies (ICTs) in their everyday lives. While some measure of hybridity is a common aspect of culture generally, and the global exchange of products, people, culture, and identities, has characterized all colonial histories, recent corporate globalization and the corresponding rise of a so-called "Information Society" based on new media technologies has produced a particularly dynamic media culture. In this cultural matrix, global and local, as well as homogenizing and diversifying, influences continuously merge in the lifestyles, performances, and sociopolitical practices of contemporary youth.

"Youth," defined alternatively as post-adolescent and pre-adult groups, or by the United Nations as the over 1.1 billion young people between the ages of 15 and 24, are perceived as a primary engine for the growth of global media culture. Youth generally comprise the most media and technologically literate sector of their societies and the multinational corporations that trade in global media commodities actively target young people as a consumer class now believed to be worth more than \$2 trillion in potential sales.

"Global youth culture" draws upon the Frankfurt School's conception of "culture industry" that, in this updated context, signifies the process by which industrialized, massproduced culture and commercial imperatives drive global capitalism and attempt to legitimate its aims by integrating youth into the capitalist system by means of their involvement with new media technologies. From this perspective, whether it is through the music and stylings of MTV, the themes and aesthetic of Hollywood films, the news content broadcast through papers, television, and even the Internet, or other aspects of popular media, global youth are seen as actively responding to and identifying with modernized and cosmopolitan Western culture. This potential for global media to enlist youth as agents for the cultural logic of advanced capitalist states has led some theorists to criticize global youth culture as dangerously ethnocentric and imperialist.

Others see global popular culture as promoting a progressive postmodern diversity, hybridized cosmopolitanism, and proliferation of voices, cultural forms, and styles. In this view, youth are being empowered by new cultural opportunities to question reactionary and regressive cultural and political attitudes in their respective societies. Therefore, while global youth culture is mistakenly characterized as being simply homogenous and imperialistic, it also cannot be separated from a rigorous critique of its political economy. In this respect, there are ways in which global youth culture is undergoing a "McDonaldization" and represents a form of "McWorld" that seeks to replace local and traditional cultures with universal liberal and egalitarian values that surreptitiously support the geopolitical aims of countries like the United States and the profits of primary multinational media conglomerates like News Corporation, AOL/Time-Warner, Vivendi Universal, Viacom, Bertelsmann, Sony, and The Walt Disney Company.

The category of "youth culture" can be traced back to theorists associated with and

influenced by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies who emphasized its counterhegemonic and "generational" qualities and examined the ways in which working-class youth subcultures resisted subordination through the production of their own culturally subversive styles. From this perspective, youth of the 1950s celebrated beatniks, teddy boys, and the styles associated with American rhythm and blues music. A decade later, when these became appropriated by the mainstream, 1960s youth turned to the mods, on the one hand, and hippie and countercultural styles of sex, drugs, and rock and roll, on the other. After the commercialization and appropriation of the counterculture in the 1970s, youth turned to new movements like punk and as the 1980s onward have seen the rise in global popularity of hip hop culture, youth have increasingly turned to more urban and underprivileged "gangsta" styles of violent rap subculture.

However, the thoroughly mediated aspects of today's youth culture, with technology like the Internet able to provide youth the world over with instant access to a wide diversity of cultural styles and artifacts, has led recent theorists to question the applicability of the concept of "subculture" in a global context. Proposing "Post-subcultural Studies" that emphasize the complexity, multiplicity, diversity, and syncretistic aspects of youth cultures as they localize global media influences and globalize local lifestyles, postmodern cultural theories are attempting to account for the ways in which global youth negotiate individualism amidst market-based tribalism and strive for political agency within a world of media spectacles. In this perspective, one would trace the international appeal of a rapper like Eminem, but also observe how local forms of hip hop have taken root from New York to Tokyo and Berlin to Sao Paulo, with global music channels and websites broadcasting not only these performances, but also hybridized forms of club music that mixes rap styles with a mélange of cultural sounds and ideas. Further, whereas it was once believed youth culture was little more than a symbolic political gesture of defiance, today's youth have utilized new media to mobilize and coordinate global political expressions like the anti-corporate globalization movement that voices youths' desire for a progressive world based upon alternative globalizations.

While television and radio remain the most powerful and pervasive media in the lives of most global youth, the Internet is often supplanting them as a primary influence and will continue to do so under institutional frameworks that push for the further development of a "wired" world that is both global village and global mall. While Western corporations like Microsoft, Yahoo, Google, Ebay, ESPN, and Electronic Arts maintain top websites for global youth, Asian sites from China, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, and Singapore also represent some of the most fashionable domains. As Asian countries are estimated to comprise 60% of the world's youth, evidence suggests Asian website popularity may still be regional in large part; but the Japanese Anime-styled Internet phenomenon of the Neopet site, where over 70 million global youth have created virtual pets that they care for and compete with for real prizes, demonstrates the manner in which online global youth culture can be hybridic and complex.

The continued growth of the Internet throughout Asia, Latin America, and Europe, as well as in parts of Africa, means that material on the global Internet will continue to become more diverse. Still, the hundreds of millions of global youth who live in abject poverty, who fight in wars, and who continue to be forced into slavery must serve as reminders that theories of global youth culture that overly celebrate its urbanity,



cosmopolitanism, and mediated qualities can be misleading and not applicable to the cultural experiences of the downtrodden whose "youth" itself has become a political question.

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#### Supplementary Reading:

Read "Chapter 8 "YOUTH CULTURE AND SUBCULTURE"

Book: CULTURE AND IDENTITY by Warren Kidd

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**By Rachid**